

First
Annual

BH Get Healthy

“The Best Health Advice I Ever Got...”

Be inspired
by the life lessons
of Canadian Olympians,
actors, singers and
health heroes
By Lisa Murphy



“I had a really bad neck injury about two years before I retired: I bruised the spinal cord in my neck and had a severe concussion. One doctor told me, ‘This is it; you should retire.’ Then I went to a trainer and he said, ‘Let’s just work things slowly and get your core strength back up before you make any decisions.’ I think not making the decision to quit at a moment when I was so vulnerable was the best thing. The team that year [2006] was probably the best I ever played on, so having to miss that would have been really disappointing.”

Cassie Campbell, 35, is a broadcaster, former captain of the Canadian women’s hockey team, two-time Olympic gold-medal winner and the co-author of *H.E.A.R.T.*, an inspirational autobiography on what it takes to succeed.

“I learned how to let go of stress thanks to my father and his ever-positive attitude. When asked how he was, he would always say ‘terrific.’ The man never let stress faze him. The way he would tilt his head to the side and shrug his shoulders would put your current situation into perspective—you realized that it could always be worse. Even on his deathbed, he was a pillar of optimism. He led by example: Eliminate stress and you’ll live a long, happy and healthy life.”

Paul Finkelstein, 46, is a teacher, an advocate for healthier food choices at schools and a regular contributor to *Best Health*.

“Before the Olympics in 2006, no matter how hard I tried to sleep, all I could do was think of the big ‘O’ on the horizon. The next day, I’d feel heavier on the ice and become short of breath during training. I consulted my doctor and came up with a few simple things to do before bed: no more coffee in the afternoon—a weakness of mine; make a list of things to do the next day so I could forget it today; take a bath before bed instead of watching TV; and listen to relaxation CDs.”

Jeffrey Buttle, 26, won the World Figure Skating Championships in March 2008 and an Olympic bronze medal in 2006. He retired in September 2008.

“Needless to say, there are many health benefits, both physical and mental, to owning and caring for an animal. My dog, Miss Louise, definitely helps keep me fit with our two- to three-hour jaunts every day. As for mental health benefits, I’ve heard that every time you pet an animal, your blood pressure lowers and stress is released! Never mind the fact that she puts a smile on my face a kazillion times a day.”

Tanya Kim, 33, is the anchor of *eTalk* on CTV and host of *eTalk Playlist*.



“A physician friend of mine studied Eastern medicine, and he taught me about the connection between mind and body. When you’re feeling rundown or you’re emotionally in a bit of a rut, you just want to hide away. But I know from my conversations with him to go to the gym and work out. It feels like hell when you’re doing it, but you walk away feeling much better.”

Actor **James McGowan**, 48, stars as Major Mike Kessler in CBC’s drama *The Border*.



“My uncle is a doctor with a tai chi school in Australia. When I was 15 or 16, I said I wanted to take up tai chi. He said, ‘Oh, that’s something for later in life.’ He didn’t mean I was too young, but he recognized there was a lot of energy bundled up in me. He said, ‘Look, you love cycling and skiing; keep on doing those things. They suit you.’ So I feel it’s really important to make lifestyle choices that make sense for your own life.”

Dr. Vincent Lam, 34, is an emergency physician, journalist and the author of *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures*, which won The Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2006.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GREG REEKIE; COURTESY OF CBC; MARGARITA LAM; ANTONIADES



It’s very important to listen to your own body. My dad [Chalmers Doane, a music educator appointed to the Order of Canada] is the kind of guy who, if he felt sick, would think about why and try different things before he ran off to the doctor. And a lot of times, he would solve things for himself in some unorthodox way. As long as I eat well, exercise, listen to my emotional state and stay in tune with myself as a person, I’m going to get clues when things are going wrong and I can take action.”

Melanie Doane, 41, is a Juno Award-winning singer. Her new album, *A Thousand Nights*, features guests such as Jim Cuddy and Ron Sexsmith.



“I never really ‘got’ running: I’d do it to push myself to the limit. Then a friend of mine, who was an excellent runner at one point in his life—he won the Detroit Marathon—told me, ‘The key is to enjoy it and have a good conversation.’ Now I run longer distances, but slower. Three or four times a week I run with Andrew Heintzman, whom I’ve written a couple of books with. Those runs have become a huge part of our brainstorming about projects together.”

Evan Solomon, 40, co-hosts *CBC News: Sunday* and *Sunday Night*, and is co-author of *Feeding the Future*.



“My father is a cardiologist, and he was ahead of his time in terms of teaching us to lead by example. So we often ate large salads and fish. I grew up not liking rich, creamy or fried foods. And when I see people coming in daily with heart attacks or angina, I see the consequences of not leading a heart-healthy life. Which is not to say I don’t like a piece of chocolate cake now and then. So, most things in moderation—except smoking: zero tolerance for that.”

Dr. Beth Abramson, 41, is a spokesperson for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and a Toronto cardiologist. →



"I had a remarkable professor who taught me that exercise enhances your body, mind and soul. I went on to become a Canadian rowing champion, but then at age 32 was afflicted with potentially crippling rheumatoid arthritis. Doctors told me not to exercise. But I saw my professor in my mind's eye. I exercised every day through the pain, and today I run one of the largest groups of fitness clubs in the world—and heli-ski in my time off!"

David Patchell-Evans, 55, is CEO & founder of GoodLife Fitness

"When I was in my early 20s, I wound up in the emergency ward a few times after experiencing searing, sharp pains in my abdomen. Doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong. One day I was watching the Dini Petty show and a guest was describing endometriosis—and the symptoms matched mine. Once I was diagnosed, I went on the pill, but hated it. So my roommate, a budding nutritionist, suggested I experiment with diet. I went off the pill and cut out all meat, sugar and refined foods. Within a year, my symptoms disappeared."

Josey Vogels, 44, is a nationally syndicated relationship columnist, radio and TV host, and the author of *Bedside Manners*.

"Small lifestyle changes can have a huge positive impact on overall health. Thanks to the advice of a good friend, when I find myself sitting down to yet another 'official' dinner, I eat only half of anything that is too fat- and calorie-laden. That way I can still enjoy cheesecake without seeing the evidence on my hips."

Mary Polak, 41, is B.C.'s minister of healthy living and sport.

What's the best health advice you ever got? Write to us at besthealthmag.ca/advice.



"My great-aunt said, 'Be the best that you can be.' A few years ago I climbed Mount Rainier. It was a tough climb over glaciers with crampons, ice picks and ropes. It was both physically challenging and mentally tough. Mountain climbing isn't the answer for all Canadians. But whatever you did yesterday, you should push yourself and move a little bit more today."

Kelly Murumets, 45, is president and CEO of ParticipAction.



"My mom passed away in 2003 from a massive heart attack. About a month or two before that, she was feeling unwell at work, and even fainted. She went to the doctor and they didn't find anything serious, but they told her to see a specialist. She didn't follow up. If she had, her arterial blockages would have been found and she might have lived longer. So listen to your doctor if he or she says, 'See a specialist.'"

Shaun Majumder, 36, is a comedian and actor on CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, CTV's *Less Than Kind* and Global's *Da Kink in My Hair*.



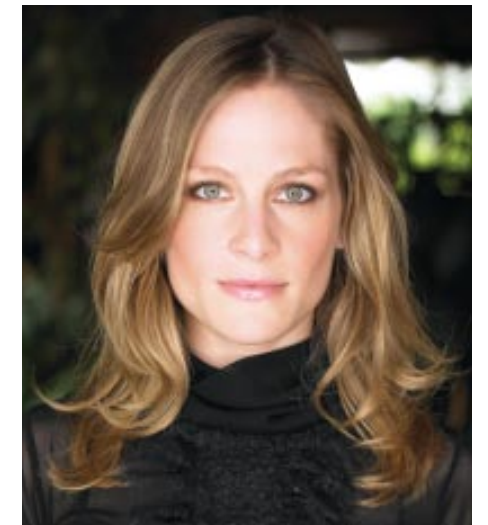
Wrestling has different weight classes, so it's one of those sports where you could be in danger of having eating issues. A friend, who was pretty young at the time, tried to cut all the fat out of her diet, and she started to have a lot of intestinal problems. It was a lesson: Anything that looks like it's pretty extreme in any way, I generally wouldn't go for that kind of a diet."

Carol Huynh, 28, won a gold medal in women's 48-kilogram freestyle wrestling at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, and is also a 2007 Pan Am Games gold medallist.



"One of my early track coaches was always trying to hold me back. I thought I'd miss opportunities if I didn't train more and try and improve faster, but he had the wisdom to know that I would end up better off if I built up slowly and turned it into a lifestyle, as I ended up doing. It's healthy to run 10 kilometres, but you have to run five kilometres first."

Brendan Brazier, 33, is a vegan triathlete, a two-time Canadian 50 km Ultra Marathon Champion, founder of Vega Whole Food nutritional products and author of *The Thrive Diet*.



"When I went to the Vancouver Film School, one of our courses was Pilates for body work. I've now been doing it for years. I have a really bad back from 13 years in gymnastics, and I'm also training for a half marathon right now. So, even if I can't do Pilates with an instructor, I've memorized the whole mat routine. I just find that proper alignment really helps. I think I'd be in a lot more pain if I wasn't doing my Pilates."

Tara Spencer-Nairn, 30, plays police officer Karen Pelly on CTV's *Corner Gas*, and has also appeared in films such as *Final Draft* and *New Waterford Girl*. □

CBC SPORTS (LE MAY DOAN), MARINASCOTTWICKENS.COM (MURUMETS)

MONIQUE SMITH (HUYNH); DAVID LEVES (SPENCER-NAIRN)